

## California and H. R. 1: The For The People Act

- **California leads the nation in redistricting.** The Constitution requires that we redraw Congressional districts every ten years based on the Census in order to ensure proportional representation. In many states, this has been done by state legislatures—but that often leads to challenging outcomes. Redistricting had become an increasingly partisan process, done behind closed doors to favor incumbents and leading to districts where representatives did not necessarily reflect their constituents. In practice, state-legislative redistricting meant politicians were choosing their voters, rather than voters choosing their politicians.

To remedy this, in 2010, California put Congressional redistricting reform on the ballot. Voters supported a reform plan that requires the state to use an independent redistricting commission to develop and enact congressional district maps. California's commission is made up of 14 members. To ensure balance, it is composed of five members from the party with the most registered voters, five from the party with the second-highest number of registered voters, and four who are not from either of the top two parties. Finally, the commission must hold public hearings where citizens can comment on any plans, ensuring transparency.

H.R. 1 (Secs. 2400 – 2435) makes many of California's important redistricting reforms national—including establishing independent redistricting commissions and prohibitions on plans that unduly favor or disfavor political parties on a statewide basis.

- **California has already implemented Automatic Voter Registration.** California has automatic voter registration through the “motor voter law,” implemented in April 2018. The law allows those interacting with the Department of Motor Vehicles to register to vote if they choose to do so.

H. R. 1 (Secs. 1011 – 1021) would bring Automatic Voter Registration nationwide, adding potentially 50 million eligible voters to the rolls. H.R. 1 builds on this California measure by expanding the agencies that can register new voters—going beyond motor vehicle authorities to include those administering Social Security, the Affordable Care Act, and other designated contributing agencies.

- **California is rolling out expansive Early Voting.** Not every voter is able to reach the polls on Election Day. To increase access, California passed the Voter's Choice Act in 2016, which allows counties to opt-in to a new model of election administration where every voter receives a ballot in the mail, in-person early voting is expanded, and voters are able to cast a ballot at any vote center within their county. The Voter's Choice Act requires that counties meet certain conditions, including presenting the State with an implementation plan, to opt-in to this more flexible voting model on or before 2020. Five counties chose to make voting more accessible by implementing the Voter's Choice Act for the 2018 cycle. Last month, Santa Clara County became the tenth county to adopt the Voter's Choice Act model for the 2020 elections. In addition to automatically receiving ballots by mail, Santa Clara County voters' options for how to return ballots will include, by mail, to any ballot drop box in the county, or at any vote center in the county convenient to them.

H. R. 1 (Sec. 1611) would standardize 15 days of early voting with all early voting sites open for no fewer than 10 hours of voting each day. It would also ensure that early voting sites are open for some period before 9 AM and after 5 PM, allowing more voters access to vote, regardless of work schedule.

- **California stands by Democracy Restoration.** California allows certain individuals with a criminal history to register to vote and to vote—restoring the franchise once someone has fully served their time. Once released from prison and discharged from parole, a Californian’s right to vote is fully restored; he or she must simply re-register to vote online or through paper registration.

*H.R. 1 (Secs. 1401 – 1408)* restores the vote to a greater population than California’s law by including those on parole. It also requires the government to notify individuals of their re-enfranchisement so they may participate in democracy—an act that’s been proven to aid in smooth reentry.

- **Young Californians are pre-registered to vote.** California makes pre-registration available to those individuals who are 16 and 17 years old. While it does not lower the voting age from 18, it simply allows 16- and 17-year-olds to register online or on paper, and has a county elections office confirm active registration once the youth turns 18.

*H.R. 1 (Sec. 1012)* would similarly allow 16- and-17-year-olds to be pre-registered to vote when they give their information to a designated registration agency.

- **California is committed to Election Security.** California responded quickly to leverage federal resources once election infrastructure was designated critical infrastructure. Accordingly, California already has strong election security measures to protect the accuracy and integrity of the vote: California requires mandatory post-election audits, requires that every ballot must either be paper or have a voter-verifiable paper audit trail, and provides cybersecurity training to all election officials. Further Secretary of State Alex Padilla, a member of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Election Infrastructure Cybersecurity Working Group, has required an update so that all voting systems meet the state’s newest testing and certification standards for the 2020 elections.

*H. R. 1 (Secs. 3000 – 3021)* provides valuable funding that would further allow California to strengthen its election security infrastructure by allowing for voting system security improvements. H.R. 1 also provides grants to conduct risk-limiting audits and establishes grants to support innovation in election infrastructure.

- **California is on the front line of combatting Dark Money.** California already has some of the strongest transparency laws in the nation, including the DISCLOSE Act, so we know who is spending in support of whom, and on what. California requires nonprofits to disclose their donors for election spending and requires that outside spenders disclose their two top donors when such donors give at least \$50,000. And, California makes reasonable accommodations to protect privacy, too—under California law, individual donors can avoid being disclosed so long as they expressly prohibit a recipient organization from using their funding for political purposes.

*H.R. 1 (Secs. 4100 – 4122)* echoes these reforms—HR.1’s DISCLOSE Act equivalent requires disclosure of donors to outside groups spending money on elections in excess of \$10,000 and further shines a light on the true source of funding by cracking down on money funneled through secret groups. H.R. 1 also includes the privacy haven for donors who forbid their donations from being used for political spending and includes express protections against harassing these donors.

*Read H.R. 1 – The “For the People Act”*

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/1/text/eh>